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lowering kit instructions street glide

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Lowering Kit Instructions for the Street Glide: A Complete Guide

When it comes to customizing a Harley-Davidson Street Glide, one of the most popular upgrades is a lowering kit. Lowering the seat and frame changes the bike's stance, improves handling, and gives it a more aggressive look. But the process can feel daunting if you've never worked on a motorcycle before. This guide walks you through the entire lowering kit installation from start to finish, with step by step instructions, essential safety tips, and a look at the pros and cons of lowering your Street Glide.

What Is a Lowering Kit?

A lowering kit is a set of parts designed to reduce the height of a motorcycle's seat, handlebars, or both. For the Street Glide, the kit usually includes:

- A new lower seat or seat post with a lower seat
- Modified or replacement rear suspension components
- Adjustable handlebars or a new stem
- Optional components such as a lower exhaust or a new swingarm

These parts work together to shift the bike's center of gravity lower, which can improve stability on corners and give the bike a tighter, more aggressive appearance.

Why Lower Your Street Glide?

There are several compelling reasons to lower a Street Glide:

- Improved Handling – A lower seat reduces the bike's roll center, making it easier to lean into turns.
- Enhanced Aesthetics – A lower stance gives the bike a more muscular look that many riders find appealing.
- Reduced Rider Height – For riders who find the standard seat too tall, a lower seat can make a big difference in comfort.
- Better Weight Distribution – Lowering the seat can shift weight forward, improving traction during acceleration.

Before you start, think about how the changes will affect your riding style and whether the benefits align with your goals.

Choosing the Right Lowering Kit

There are two main types of lowering kits for the Street Glide: **seat only kits** and **full suspension kits**. The right choice depends on how aggressive you want the lowering to be and how much time you're willing to spend on the project.

Seat Only Kits

These kits replace the stock seat with a lower seat or add a seat post that sits lower. They're the quickest and easiest option, often requiring no suspension changes.

- Pros: Fast installation, low cost, minimal mechanical changes.

- Cons: Limited lowering, no suspension adjustment.

Full Suspension Kits

Full suspension kits replace the rear shock and sometimes the swingarm to lower the entire bike. This option offers the most dramatic change but also demands more work and precision.

- Pros: Maximum lowering, improved handling, adjustable geometry.
- Cons: Higher cost, more complex installation, requires re bending or replacing some components.

Key Factors to Consider

1. Desired Height – Measure the current seat height and decide how far you want to lower it.
2. Budget – Seat only kits typically cost between $150–$300, while full suspension kits can range from $400–$800.
3. Skill Level – If you're new to motorcycle maintenance, a seat only kit is safer.
4. Compatibility – Verify that the kit is specifically designed for the Street Glide's year and engine type.

Preparation & Tools Needed

Before you begin, gather the necessary tools and prepare a clean, organized workspace. Below is a comprehensive list of tools you'll likely need:

- Torque wrench (capable of 30–60 /lb ft)
- Socket set (including 10 /mm, 12 /mm, 14 /mm, 17 /mm, 20 /mm)
- Ratchet and extension bars
- Allen key set (0.8 /mm to 6 /mm)
- Phillips and flathead screwdrivers
- Wrench set (8 /mm, 10 /mm, 12 /mm)
- Impact driver (optional but helpful for stubborn bolts)
- Jack or motorcycle lift (to raise the rear wheel)
- Work gloves and safety glasses
- Bike stand or sturdy workbench
- Cleaning supplies (cloths, degreaser, rags)
- New bolts and hardware (often supplied with the kit)

Make sure you have a clear, well lit area. Keep the bike upright on a stand or lift so you can easily access the rear suspension and seat area.

Step by Step Lowering Kit Instructions

Below is a detailed, step by step guide for installing a standard lowering kit on a Street Glide. The instructions assume you're using a seat only kit, but many steps apply to a full suspension kit with minor variations.

Step 1: Safety First – Secure the Bike

1. Place the Street Glide on a stable workbench or bike stand. Ensure the front wheel is supported and the bike is balanced.
2. Engage the parking brake and, if possible, place a block under the front wheel to prevent movement.
3. Wear safety glasses and gloves to protect against debris.

Step 2: Remove the Existing Seat

1. Locate the seat bolts. On the Street Glide, these are usually 10 /mm or 12 /mm bolts positioned under the seat.
2. Using the socket set, loosen the bolts while the seat is still attached. Keep the seat in place to avoid it falling.

3. Once all bolts are removed, gently lift the seat off. If it's stuck, use a rubber mallet to tap lightly around the edges.
4. Set the old seat aside; you may need it for reference or as a backup.

Step 3: Inspect the Seat Rails and Attachments

1. Check the seat rails for cracks or wear. A damaged rail can compromise the new seat's stability.
2. Clean the rails with a degreaser and a rag. Remove any grime, oil, or debris that might interfere with the new seat's fit.
3. Inspect the seat attachment points for rust or corrosion. If you find any, consider replacing or cleaning them.

Step 4: Install the New Seat Post (if applicable)

1. If your kit includes a seat post, align it with the seat rails. Some kits come with a seat post that slides into the rails, while others require a seat post bracket.
2. Secure the seat post using the bolts supplied with the kit. Tighten them to the manufacturer's torque specifications (usually 30–35 /lb ft).
3. Double check that the seat post is level and firmly seated.

Step 5: Mount the Lower Seat

1. Place the new lower seat onto the seat rails or seat post. Make sure it's aligned properly, with the seat's centerline matching the bike's centerline.
2. Reattach the seat bolts. Use a torque wrench to tighten to the specified torque (typically 30–35 /lb ft for 10 /mm or 12 /mm bolts).
3. Check for any wobble or play. The seat should feel solid and stable.

Step 6: Adjust the Handlebar Height (Optional)

1. If you want to lower the handlebars as well, you'll need a new stem or adjustable handlebars.
2. Remove the existing stem by loosening the stem bolts (usually 12 /mm or 14 /mm).
3. Install the new stem or adjust the handlebar height by changing the stem length. Tighten the bolts to the manufacturer's torque spec.
4. Reattach the front brake and turn signals, ensuring they remain within reach.

Step 7: Check Suspension Settings

1. Even with a seat only kit, you may want to adjust the rear suspension preload to accommodate the new seat height.
2. Locate the preload adjustment on the rear shock. Turn the adjustment screw until the seat sits at the desired height when the bike is on a level surface.
3. Recheck the seat height after adjustment to confirm it's correct.

Step 8: Final Inspection and Test Ride

1. Re inspect all bolts and fasteners to ensure they're properly tightened.
2. Check that the seat is level, the handlebars are within comfortable reach, and the bike's weight distribution feels balanced.
3. Take the Street Glide for a short test ride on a quiet street. Pay attention to handling, braking, and steering feel.
4. Make any final adjustments if necessary. If the bike feels too stiff or too loose, tweak the suspension or seat height again.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Even experienced riders can run into issues when installing a lowering kit. Here are some common mistakes and

how to prevent them:

- Over tightening bolts – This can strip threads or crack the seat rails. Always use a torque wrench and follow the manufacturer's specifications.
- Ignoring seat rail condition – A cracked or warped rail will compromise safety. Replace any damaged rails before installing the new seat.
- Failing to adjust suspension preload – Without proper preload, the bike may feel unstable or the seat may sit too high.
- Skipping a test ride – A quick test ride helps identify issues early. Don't rush to the next step until you're satisfied with the bike's feel.
- Using the wrong bolt size – Double check the bolt specifications in the kit's instructions. Using the wrong size can lead to loose or broken bolts.

Maintenance After Lowering

Once you've lowered your Street Glide, there are a few maintenance steps to keep the bike running smoothly:

1. Regularly Inspect Bolts – Check all seat, suspension, and handlebar bolts for tightness every 500 miles or so.
2. Keep the Seat Clean – Dirt and grime can accumulate around the seat rails. Clean them with a mild soap solution and a soft brush.
3. Monitor Suspension Wear – Lowering changes the load on the rear shock. Inspect for leaks or loss of damping performance.
4. Update Tires if Needed – A lower stance can affect tire wear. Replace tires sooner if you notice uneven wear patterns.
5. Check for Alignment Issues – If you notice any steering drift or uneven tire wear, have a professional check the bike's alignment.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can I install a lowering kit on any Street Glide?

Most lowering kits are designed for specific Street Glide models, usually from 2015 to 2020. Always confirm the kit's compatibility with your bike's year and engine type before purchasing.

Will lowering the seat affect the bike's warranty?

Modifying the seat or suspension can void certain warranty provisions. Check with your Harley dealer or read the warranty terms carefully before proceeding.

Do I need

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